

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) to (d). Exploration and exploitation of minerals through the country including the North-Eastern Region and the National Capital Territory of Delhi are on going plan activities of the Government. However, as a part of the overall economic development in the North-Eastern Region Government of India have recently constituted a Task Force for evolving an Action Plan to identify possibilities and thrust areas to facilitate proper exploration and exploitation of mineral resources in the North-Eastern States. Among other things, the Terms of Reference of the Task Force are to identify thrust areas for geological, environmental and mineral studies, to identify individual mineral deposits for exploitation and to recommend neogessary administrative infrastructure for mineral development in the North-Eastern States. No Task Force has been constituted for the National Capital Territory of Delhi by the Ministry of Mines, Government of India.

The Task Force has started preliminary activities and so far no expenditure has been incurred in this regard. The actual amount for exploration and exploitation of mineral resources in the country including the North-Eastern Region are as per the provisions in the Annual Plan and Five Year Plan of the country.

Import/Export of Steel

*414. SHRI SOUMYA RANJAN : Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state :

(a) the quantity of steel produced, imported and exported during 1994-95, 1995-96 and 1996-97 (so far);

(b) the capacity utilisation of the installed and operational steel plants in the country, separately for public and private sector during these years; and

(c) the steps taken or being taken during 1996-97 to improve the capacity utilisation?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) The quantity of finished steel produced, imported and exported during 1994-95, 1995-96 and April-November, 1996-97 is as under :

	(In Million Tonnes)		
	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97* (April-November) (Provisional)
Production	17.82	21.40	14.80
Import	1.70	1.57	1.04
Export	0.92	1.07	0.65

Partly Estimated.

(b) The capacity utilisation of public and private sector steel plants in production has been estimated as under :

	Public Sector	Private Sector
1994-95	86%	68%
1995-96	87%	67%
1996-97 (April-Nov.)	87%	62%

(c) In a market economy capacity utilisation would depend on several factors such as demand, availability, prices etc. In order to improve capacity utilisation, SAIL has taken up modernisation of its plants at Rourkela, Bokaro and Durgapur. Other steps being taken by SAIL include improving the quality of inputs, improving operating and maintenance practices, maximising captive power generation and improving inter-plant synergy. Similarly, Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL) has taken measures to improve capacity utilisation by setting up of balancing facilities, imparting training and skill development to the employees, taking up modifications to the plans and equipment to improve production and productivity capital restructuring, cost reduction etc.

Acquisition of Electric Passenger Locomotives

*415. SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Railways has acquired AC 3 phase 6,000 horse-power electric passenger locomotives from M/s. Asea Brown Bover (ABB) of Switzerland under an agreement for technology transfer;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of passenger and freight locomotives ordered from ABB and the respective haulage capacity of these locomotives; and

(d) the time by which the process of technology transfer is likely to be completed and indigenous manufacture of ABB locos likely to commence?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. Indian Railways have acquired 10 Nos. of 5440 HP Electric passenger locomotives alongwith one passenger locomotive to serve as bank of spares at total Free-on-Board cost of Swiss Francs 54268500 + Deutsche Marks 42042000 equivalent to Rs. 259 Crores from ABB/Switzerland. These locomotives were acquired by the Railways between Oct. '95 to Sept. '96 against the supply contract placed in July '93.

(c) Ten passenger and twenty freight locomotives were ordered on M/s. ABB in July '93. In addition, 1